

THE COMING OF URBAN THE FIFTH

now leads me away for the honour of the Church." Ill-health and the evil influence of the French cardinals were probably the real explanations; the only plausible excuse that Urban could have offered was that, Italy being now pacified, his presence was needed in Avignon to make peace between France and England, who had renewed hostilities. On June 7, he made two cardinals, both of whom were soon to touch Catherine's life very nearly: Pierre d'Estaing, with the title of Santa Maria in Trastevere, and the Bishop of Florence, Piero Corsini, the nephew of Piero degli Albizzi, whose faction had always favoured the league of Florence with the Church. He likewise appointed Pierre d'Estaing, who was a great-hearted and far-seeing man, of virtuous life and enlightened views, albeit of an aristocratic and somewhat overbearing disposition, to the southern legation in Italy; the northern legation, that called of Bologna, he had previously, in January, 1368, assigned to his own brother, Anglico de Grimoard. He now bade the Romans farewell, promising still to care for them as a father, urging them to remain at peace and not prevent his return, or the coming of his successor. "Nevertheless," he said, "we bear witness that we and our brothers, the cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, and our familiars and officers, have remained for three years with you and in the places round about, in great quiet and consolation; and you, collectively and individually, have treated us and our Curia with reverence and kindness."¹

Birgitta had gone with her sons, Charles and Birger, to Amalfi. She returned, to find Urban on the point of departure, and resolved to make a last effort to see him. It was in July when she reached Viterbo and went out to Montefiascone, where the Pope was. With her came a man of high repute for sanctity, whom we shall meet again in connection with Catherine : the "hermit bishop," Alfonso da Vadaterra. Born of a Sienese father and a Spanish mother, Alfonso had begun a brilliant ecclesiastical career as Bishop of Jaen, but had renounced his bishopric, distributed his goods among the poor, and was now living at Rome ¹

Brief of June 26, 1370, in Raynaldus, vii. p. 190.